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Daily Highlights

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* General Assembly calls on States to become parties to 1982 Law of the Sea Convention; urges international community to take greater enforcement responsibility to comply with global moratorium on large-scale drift-net fishing on high seas.

* Economic and Financial Committee approves draft concerning coercive economic measures against developing countries.

* Secretary-General is in Geneva in preparation for the Peace Implementation Conference on the former Yugoslavia to be held in London this weekend.

* UNHCR says agency has 3-phase plan to repatriate 1.2 million refugees to the former Yugoslavia.

* Director-General of UNIDO says the Organization must continue its vital assistance to developing countries.

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The General Assembly has called upon all States that have not done so, to become parties to the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. In a resolution adopted by a vote of 132 in favour to 1 against (Turkey) with 3 abstentions, the Assembly also emphasized the importance of making adequate provisions for the efficient functioning of the institutions established by the Convention.

In a statement to the Assembly, the representative of Fiji, Ambassador Satya Nandan said the Convention on the Law of the Sea was in good shape and "heading towards the open sea with a full sail and universal support". The convention had set out new rules for the use of the oceans and the management of its resources, and established a balance between competing interests, he said.

Under the terms of another resolution, adopted without a vote, the Assembly emphasized the importance of the early entry into force and effective implementation of the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. States that had not yet signed, ratified or acceded to the Agreement which opened for signature on Monday, were called upon to do so.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

A third resolution urged the international community to take greater enforcement responsibility to ensure full compliance with the global moratorium on large-scale drift-net fishing on the high seas. The representative of the United States said his Government had taken steps to implement the resolution, including among other things, prohibiting large-scale drift-net fishing in the country's exclusive economic zone and making it unlawful for its nationals and vessels to engage in large-scale drift-net fishing anywhere on the high-seas.

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The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) has called on the General Assembly to urge the international community to adopt effective measures to eliminate the use by some developed countries of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries. This, the Committee said, was as a means of forcibly imposing the will of one State on another. Under the terms of the draft, the Secretary-General would be requested to assign to the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, the task of continuing to monitor the imposition of those measures and to prepare possible methodologies or criteria for evaluating their impact on the affected countries, including on their trade and development.

Under the terms of another draft on trade and development, the Assembly would decide to convene the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD IX) in Midrand, South Africa next April.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is in Geneva following a 10-day five-nation tour of west Africa. The Secretary-General was conducting internal meetings with his senior aides on the situation in the former Yugoslavia.

The purpose of a meeting tomorrow at the Palais de Nations in Geneva was to prepare for the London Peace Implementation Conference to be held on 8 and 9 December, a United Nations spokesman said. The Secretary-General was to examine the role of the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia, in light of the evolution of the peace process in the region, including the questions of rehabilitation and construction and precisely what role the United Nations would play under the Dayton Agreements. Expected to participate in the meeting were Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia; Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Former Yugoslavia and Special Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Jose Ayala Lasso, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and General Rupert Smith, Force Commander, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata was in Zagreb as part of her visit to the region of the former Yugoslavia. At a press conference on Tuesday, Mrs. Ogata acknowledged the difficulties involved in bringing home 1.3 million Bosnian refugees and said that she was in the country to discuss UNHCR's repatriation programme with the governments of the region.

Mrs. Ogata said the Dayton peace agreement gave UNCHR not only a continuation of the role as the lead agency in humanitarian affairs, but also particularly to devise a plan for repatriation of refugees and return of the internally displaced people. She said the question of repatriation was a very complex one, explaining that UNHCR had a three-phase plan to bring people home.

In the first phase, UNHCR would be returning an estimated 1.2 million displaced people inside Bosnia and Herzegovina, because they were the ones who were with the immediate need of some place to go where they could have shelter and safety. In the next phase the Agency would bring people who were refugees in the neighbouring countries. In the final phase UNHCR hoped those who went to Europe would be able to return.

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There are reports of the continuation of looting and burning of houses in Kronic Grad and areas around Sipovo in the former Yugoslavia. A United Nations spokesman said United Nations sources had witnessed the stripping and looting of buildings by troops wearing Bosnian Croat Army and Croatian Army uniforms. An entire village north-west of Mrkonic Grad had been burnt to the ground, according to the spokesman. From Gorazde, United Nations military observers reported that a small number of houses in the south of the enclave of Gorazde were burned or being stripped. This area is due to be handed over to the Bosnian Federation under the Dayton Agreements.

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The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), must continue its vital assistance to developing countries to build their industries and achieve a better life for their people, even with reduced funding, according to the Director-General of the Organization. Mauricio de Maria y Campos gave that assurance while responding to the announcement by the United States that it would leave UNIDO at the end of 1996. He said UNIDO was a unique forum for industrial development dedicated to providing client countries with manufacturing technology and management advice.

With regard to the United States decision, Mr. de Maria Y Campos said the loss of the United States membership would be felt not only in the lack of financial, but also moral support for the Organization's crucial work. However, he added, UNIDO would continue to serve its constituents, since they relied on the Organization for their industrial future.

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